

April 22, 2020

# FAQs: Health, Safety and Travel during COVID-19 Response in Guatemala

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# **1. General Information about the situation in Guatemala during the COVID-19 crisis**

## **What restrictions are currently in place in Guatemala in response to COVID-19?**

Recently the Guatemalan government declared a State of Calamity to expand measures aimed at protecting the health and safety of all persons in Guatemala, including U.S. citizens.

### **State of Calamity (*Estado de calamidad*)**

The Guatemalan government declared a “state of calamity” on March 5 and then extended the expiration of this declaration to May 5. Declaring a “state of calamity” allows the Guatemalan government to take exceptional measures to protect national security (similar to a “state of emergency” in the United States). Under a state of calamity, the Guatemalan government can authorize specific actions, such as border closures and curfew (explained below). For updates related to the state of calamity, we refer you to the Guatemalan government:

<https://twitter.com/GuatemalaGob>

All U.S. citizens in Guatemala are expected to obey the official policies of the Guatemalan government. Several of the official measures implemented by the Guatemalan government that impact U.S. citizens currently in Guatemala are explained here:

- 1. Closing of borders (*Cierre de fronteras*)**
- 2. National curfew (*Toque de queda*)**
- 3. Prohibition of Inter-Departamental Travel**
- 4. Mandatory Mask and Social Distancing**
- 5. Closure of Beaches, Lakes and Rivers**
- 6. Additional Department and Municipality Level Restrictions**
- 7. Prohibitions on Alcohol**

### **1. Closing of Borders (*Cierre de fronteras*)**

The Guatemalan government is currently barring entry to most non-Guatemalans (with specific exceptions for accredited diplomatic personnel, health and security personnel, and exceptional cases as designated by the Guatemalan government) – by its land, sea, and air borders.

Airport operations and routine commercial flights out of Guatemala have been suspended. The U.S. Embassy continues to work with the Guatemalan government to permit departure of certain flights for U.S. citizens and others from Guatemalan airspace to the United States. The Guatemalan government can adjust its policy on national border closings at any time. We refer you to the Guatemalan Immigration Office for updated information on national borders:

<https://twitter.com/MigracionGuate>

For information on land travel restrictions, see the question below titled Can I Travel by Land in Guatemala.

## **2. National Curfew (*Toque de queda*)**

A mandatory curfew is in place, which now lasts from 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. each day. Prior to President Giammattei's April 19<sup>th</sup> statement, the curfew began at 4:00 p.m. each day, but it has now been eased by two hours. Every individual in Guatemala — including U.S. citizens — is required to remain inside their domicile during curfew hours (with exceptions for health, security, restaurant delivery services, certain media and legal personnel in pursuit of their duties, and patients receiving urgent treatment for chronic conditions). The Guatemalan government may extend the deadline of the curfew at any time. The U.S. Embassy reminds U.S. citizens in Guatemala that they are expected to obey the curfew, which is being enforced by Guatemalan law enforcement. Violators of the curfew restrictions risk arrest. More information at the webpage of the Ministry of Governance: <https://mingob.gob.gt/pnc-continua-deteniendo-a-personas-que-incumplen-el-toque-de-queda/>

## **3. Prohibition of Inter-Departmental travel**

All travel between or into the departments of Sacatepéquez, Chimaltenango, Guatemala and El Progreso is prohibited. Travel between other departments in Guatemala is permitted by taxi or private vehicle only, provided that it does not take place during daily curfew hours between 6:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. In departments for which inter-departmental travel is still prohibited, the United States Embassy in Guatemala is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis.

See the question titled, “Can I Travel by Land in Guatemala?” in this document for information on traveling to the airport for ticketed flights.

## **4. Mandatory Mask and Social Distancing**

All individuals must wear masks in public spaces, including in grocery stores and on the street, to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in fines of up to Q150,000.

The Government of Guatemala imposed additional social distancing restrictions:

- Everyone is required to maintain a 4.5 ft distance from each other in public spaces.
- Public religious gatherings and celebrations of any size are prohibited.
- Visits to individuals in hospitals or prisons are prohibited.
- In-person academic activities at all levels are suspended through April 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **5. Closure of Beaches, Lakes, and Rivers**

On April 2, the Government of Guatemala announced that all visits to beaches, lakes and rivers in the country are prohibited. Closures apply 24 hours a day and are not limited to curfew hours. This restriction is currently in place until April 27<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 am.

## **6. Additional Department and Municipality-Level Restrictions**

Beyond the national-level restrictions mentioned above, different municipalities within the country may adopt additional restrictive measures on travel and outdoor activities. Please monitor local news reports to receive the latest information. American Citizens in need of immediate assistance should contact the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT)'s Tourist Assistance Program (PROATUR) through its website <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/es/noticias.php> or by dialing 1500.

For more information on the guidelines provided by the Government of Guatemala visit: <https://legal.dca.gob.gt/>

Ministry of Governance: <https://mingob.gob.gt/> and <https://www.facebook.com/mingobguate/>

U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19-2/>

## **7. Prohibitions on Alcohol**

The sale and purchase of alcohol is permitted between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Consumption of alcohol in public areas is prohibited.

## **Are all borders and airports closed in Guatemala?**

Starting March 5, the Government of Guatemala began taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by restricting travel to and from Guatemala. As of March 17, regular commercial flights were suspended. The Guatemalan government may reassess this decision at any time. Most land borders are also closed but only Guatemalan authorities can provide the latest information.

The Government of Guatemala is the authority that determines entry and exit from the country. We refer you to the links below for the most recent information.

Guatemalan Immigration Office (Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración): <http://igm.gob.gt/>  
Government of Guatemala: <https://www.guatemala.gob.gt/>  
U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19-2/>

See Section 2 of this document for guidance on travel options for departing Guatemala.

## **Can I travel by land within Guatemala?**

Public transportation within Guatemala is suspended.

All travel between or into the departments of Sacatepéquez, Chimaltenango, Guatemala and El Progreso is prohibited. Travel between other departments in Guatemala is permitted by taxi or private vehicle only, provided that it does not take place during daily curfew hours between 6:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. In departments for which inter-departmental travel is still prohibited, the United States Embassy in Guatemala is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis.

For U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents who need to travel to the airport in Guatemala City: in previous weeks, United Airlines has sent manifested passengers U.S. Embassy-issued letters requesting permission to cross inter-departmental boundaries into the Department of Guatemala for the purpose of travel to Aurora International airport to fly back to the United States. Guatemala's National Civil Police (*Policia Nacional Civil*, PNC) has honored these letters. If the current restrictions on inter-Departmental travel remain in place on the dates of future flights, we expect this arrangement to continue as well. Travelers should contact United Airlines for details about travel letters.

If any changes in these procedures need to be made, the Embassy will provide updated information as soon as it is available.

The restrictions on inter-departmental travel do not impede individuals currently in the Department of Guatemala, including those in Guatemala City, from traveling to the airport to board the upcoming United Airlines flights.

For specific questions about safety and viability of land travel, contact the Guatemalan Agency for Tourist Assistance (PROATUR): <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/safety-tips.php?lang=EN> or dial (502) 2421 2810.

There are reports that some local Guatemalan communities are taking unofficial action to restrict individuals from entering or exiting their communities in an attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In some cases, non-Guatemalan citizens have been prevented from entering or leaving a community — or upon leaving, are not allowed to return. Several reports in this regard have come from communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. If any U.S. citizen feels they are in danger, they should call Guatemalan law enforcement at 120, 122, or 123 (the equivalent of “911” in the United States) and the U.S. Embassy (502) 2326 4000 to report the situation. For more information and updates, please call the Guatemalan tourism police at 1500 or visit the Guatemalan Tourist Authority: <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/safety-tips.php?lang=EN>

## **Can I travel by air within Guatemala?**

You can find information about domestic flight availability and airports through the Guatemalan Agency for Civil Aviation (DGAC) at <http://www.dgac.gob.gt/index.php>. Please remember that all travel, including travel to and from airports to homes or hotels, would have to occur outside of curfew hours (currently 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.) and in compliance with restrictions on travel between departments.

## **Where can I find information about international flights to/from Guatemala?**

Although international flights are currently not operating normally, information can be found at the Guatemalan Agency for Civil Aviation (DGAC) at <http://www.dgac.gob.gt/index.php>. Interested travelers should also contact airlines directly and check their websites for flight information.

## **Should I try to cross into Mexico and fly to U.S. from there?**

The Guatemalan government is currently allowing foreign travelers to exit via land border crossing into Mexico, and Mexico is currently allowing them to enter, but this could change at any time. In addition, travel from and between some departments within Guatemala is currently restricted. The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala is not able to assist in procuring waivers to this prohibition on an individual basis.

The U.S. Embassy does not recommend this option as it is not guaranteed that traveling by land out of Guatemala will result in successful return to the United States, or that it is safe to do so. For the past year Embassy personnel have not been allowed to conduct personal travel in Huehuetenango or San Marcos (where the Tecún Umán border crossing is located) due to security concerns. Additionally, given the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, border passage and flight availability in Mexico could change at any time. All travelers considering exiting Guatemala by land should research travel and security advisories (available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)) for all portions of their planned route, as well as the CDC's COVID-19 country health guides (available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>).

U.S. Embassy in Mexico

Website: <https://mx.usembassy.gov/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/mexico.usembassy>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/USEmbassyMex>

## **Where can I find all alerts published by the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala related to the COVID-19 crisis?**

U.S. Embassy in Guatemala

Website: <https://gt.usembassy.govhttps://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala>

## **Where can I find health information about COVID-19?**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Guatemalan Ministry of Health: <https://www.mspas.gob.gt/>

Public hospitals in Guatemala: <https://www.mspas.gob.gt/index.php/servicios/webs-de-hospitals>

General information on medical assistance: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/doctors/>

## **What should I do if my 90-day authorization (tourist visa) to remain in Guatemala expired?**

The Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración (Guatemalan immigration office) announced on April 6, 2020 that non-Guatemalans who entered Guatemala legally using a tourist visa, but who are unable to depart due to the travel restrictions put in place by the Guatemalan government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be allowed to remain in Guatemala in legal status until the travel restrictions are lifted, even if their 90-day authorization to remain in Guatemala has lapsed at that time.

Non-Guatemalans whose 90-day status lapsed before March 5, 2020 and who are unlawfully present in Guatemala must be processed at the Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración in Guatemala City to resolve their status.

For additional information, please contact the Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración at (502) 2411-2411. Refer to the Acuerdo de Autoridad Migratoria Nacional No. 3-2018 which provides a complete fee schedule.

See message posted by U.S. Embassy Guatemala on April 6:

<https://gt.usembassy.gov/information-for-u-s-citizens-in-guatemala-regarding-visa-status/>

## **If I go back to the U.S. will I be quarantined?**

Visit the Department of Homeland Security (<https://www.dhs.gov/>) and Department of Health and Human Services (<https://www.hhs.gov/>) for the latest information for individuals entering the United States.

## **2. Air travel options not coordinated by the Department of State**

The United States Embassy in Guatemala City advises U.S. citizens that United Airlines has recently open flights from Guatemala City to the United States on the following dates:

**Friday, April 24** – 12:00 departure (Flight 3021) from Guatemala City to Houston, TX.

**Saturday April 25** – 12:00 departure (Flight 3022) from Guatemala City to Houston, TX.

**Wednesday, April 29** – 12:00 departure (Flight 3026) from Guatemala City to Houston, TX.

**Friday, May 1** – 12:00 departure (Flight 3027) from Guatemala City to Houston, TX.

These flights are limited offerings and we do not expect them to continue on a regular basis. We urge U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to travel to the United States to contact United Airlines directly to make a booking. We also ask U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents still wishing to return to the United States to continue to check the availability of these and other commercial flight options as they are scheduled. Reservations for commercial flights would be made directly with the airlines, not the U.S. Embassy, so please contact them directly for bookings. Please contact United Airlines directly at <https://www.united.com> or [VentasGUA@united.com](mailto:VentasGUA@united.com) to make reservations.

In previous weeks, United Airlines has sent manifested passengers U.S. Embassy-issued letters requesting permission to cross inter-departmental boundaries into the Department of Guatemala for the purpose of travel to Aurora International airport to fly back to the United States. Guatemala's National Civil Police (*Policia Nacional Civil*, PNC) has honored these letters. If the current restrictions on inter-Departmental travel remain in place on the dates of these flights, we expect this arrangement to continue as well. Travelers should contact United Airlines for details about travel letters.

If any changes in these procedures need to be made, the Embassy will provide updated information as soon as it is available.

For more information on inter-departmental transit to airport see Section 1 of this document: Can I Travel by Land in Guatemala?

**Please note, prices are set by the carriers, not the U.S. Government.**

The U.S. Embassy would like to emphasize Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent message to U.S. citizens currently outside the United States:

*“We do not know in some countries how long the continued commercial flights in your country may continue to operate. We can’t guarantee the U.S. Government’s ability to arrange chartered flights indefinitely...”*

*“Americans abroad who wish to return home [to the United States] should do so immediately and make arrangements to accomplish that.”*

Please continue to monitor U.S. Embassy online accounts for updated information:

U.S. Embassy in Guatemala

Website: <https://gt.usembassy.gov>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala>

Please contact [AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov](mailto:AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov) for any urgent inquiries.

### **3. Charter flights organized by the Department of State**

#### **Is the U.S. Embassy organizing charter flights for U.S. citizens?**

The last scheduled State Department-coordinated charter flights from Guatemala City to Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) departed on March, 31. From March 23-31, the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala coordinated 12 charter flights, from La Aurora Airport to Dallas-Fort Worth, evacuating 1,900 U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. **At this time, we do not expect additional State Department charter flights will be made available.**

We urge U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to return to the United States to continue to check the availability of commercial flights and contact airlines directly to make a booking. See Section 2 of this document.

As we do not anticipate additional State Department charter flights will be available, we have closed the Embassy’s online data entry form and will not be taking additional registrations. Information already collected by the Embassy will not be retained. For any possible U.S. Government-coordinated flights in the future, the U.S. Embassy will provide instructions regarding its registration process at that time. However, as we do not anticipate that this will likely become an option, we urge travelers to continue to seek commercial flight options from Guatemala City to the United States.

U.S. Embassy Guatemala alerts for U.S citizens related to COVID-19:

<https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

## **Should I try to book a flight on a non-U.S. Government charter flight?**

Yes. See Section 2 of this document.

## **How will the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala communicate with me?**

U.S. Embassy email addresses end in “[@state.gov](mailto:@state.gov).”

Please contact [AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov](mailto:AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov) for any urgent inquiries.

# **4. Resources**

## **Where can I get more information?**

Embassy website: <https://gt.usembassy.gov>,

Covid-19 updates: <https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/embajada.euuu.guatemala>

Phone: (502) 2326 4000

American Citizens email: [Amcitsguatemala@state.gov](mailto:Amcitsguatemala@state.gov)

State Department’s Global Level 4 Health Travel Advisory: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

What the Department of State can and cannot do during a crisis:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/what-state-dept-can-cant-do-crisis.html>

Consult the CDC ( <https://www.cdc.gov/> )website for the most up-to-date information. For the most recent information on what you can do to reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19 please see the CDC’s latest recommendations at [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fprevention.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fprevention.html)

Visit the COVID-19 crisis page on [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for the latest information:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>

Check with your airlines, cruise lines, or travel operators regarding any updated information about your travel plans and/or restrictions.

Visit the Department of Homeland Security (<https://www.dhs.gov/>) on the latest travel restrictions to the U.S.

Monitor local news for updates.

## **Where do I find information published by the Government of Guatemala?**

Guatemalan Government (Information in Spanish)

Website: <https://www.guatemala.gob.gt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/guatemalagob/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GuatemalaGob>

PROATUR (Tourist Assistance Program) (information in English)

Part of the Guatemalan Official Tourism Agency **INGUAT**

Phone: 1500 / 2421-2810

Website: <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/about-proatur.php>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitGuatemala>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/visitguatemala>

INGUAT (Official Tourism Agency) (information in Spanish)

Phone: 1517 / 1540

Website: <http://inguat.gob.gt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/inguat/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/InguatPrensa>

Ministry of Government

Website: <https://mingob.gob.gt/>

Phone: 1517 / 1540

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mingobguate/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mingobguate>